

EXAMINING THE EFFECT OF INSTRUCTION OF ENGLISH METALINGUISTIC
TERMINOLOGY ON GRAMMAR PERFORMANCE IN BEGINNING FRENCH

By

ALISON MARIE CLIFTON

A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2007

© 2007 Alison Marie Clifton

With gratitude to my parents for their love and encouragement

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to the faculty and staff in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures for their support throughout the writing process. I am also grateful for the encouragement that I received from family and friends. I thank you for your unwavering faith in me.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	4
LIST OF TABLES.....	7
LIST OF FIGURES	8
ABSTRACT.....	9
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	10
2 CONTENT ANALYSIS.....	20
3 METHODOLOGY	28
Survey.....	28
Participants	29
Materials	29
Procedure.....	29
Experimental Study	30
Participants	31
Materials	32
Procedure	34
Control group	34
Experimental group.....	34
Assessment	35
4 RESULTS	38
Survey.....	38
Experimental Study	43
5 CONCLUSION.....	54
APPENDIX	
A SURVEY	58
B INFORMED CONSENT FORMS	59
C SCRIPTS AND POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS	61
D ASSESSMENTS.....	66

LIST OF REFERENCES	68
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH	69

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>		<u>Page</u>
2-1	Metalinguistic terminology used in the grammar explanations of four beginning level French texts	27
3-1	Characteristics of survey participants	37
3-2	Characteristics of study participants	37
4-1	Percentage of survey participants able to correctly identify terms	49
4-2	Comparison of percentages of survey participants able to correctly identify terms.....	50
4-3	Mean scores of the total number of questions answered correctly	53
4-4	Mean scores of the number of correct elements included in participant responses.....	53

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>		<u>Page</u>
4-1	Number of grammatical items correctly identified by survey participants.....	48
4-2	Comparison of percentages of survey participants able to correctly identify terms.....	51
4-3	Number of grammatical items correctly identified by participants with four or more years of foreign language study	52
4-4	Number of grammatical items correctly identified by participants with less than four years of language study.....	52

Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School
of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

EXAMINING THE EFFECT OF INSTRUCTION OF ENGLISH METALINGUISTIC
TERMINOLOGY ON GRAMMAR PERFORMANCE IN BEGINNING FRENCH

By

Alison Marie Clifton

August 2007

Chair: Hélène Blondeau

Major: French

This study examines the effect of instruction of metalinguistic terminology on students' ability to understand L2 grammar. The study consists of three distinct investigations. First, a content analysis of four first-year French textbooks was conducted to investigate the type of terminology employed in grammar presentations and the extent to which this terminology is defined. Next, a survey was conducted which aimed to assess beginning French learners' knowledge of grammatical terminology. Finally, an empirical investigation was conducted in order to determine the effect of instruction of metalinguistic terminology on students' ability to form the *passé composé* and *imparfait* French tenses.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Grammar instruction has played a vital role in classroom language teaching for many years. This tradition has been maintained and is apparent in the grammar explanations that are present in many of the foreign language textbooks used in language classrooms today. Many language textbooks have maintained a traditional approach to presenting grammar, including using metalinguistic, or grammatical, terminology in explaining grammatical features. All the while, however, students seem to be entering language classrooms with little or no knowledge of the meaning of these terms, making these grammar explanations difficult to comprehend.

This paper examines the relationship between the metalinguistic terminology that many foreign language textbooks employ in presenting grammar and the extent to which students understand the meaning of those metalinguistic terms. Furthermore, the paper investigates the effect of instruction of metalinguistic terminology on students' comprehension of L2 grammar. The paper seeks to explore whether instruction aimed at increasing students' knowledge of grammatical metalanguage helps students in learning L2 grammar.

Over the past sixty years a variety of approaches to foreign language teaching have been developed and applied for use within language classrooms. These approaches have espoused a range of attitudes concerning the importance of grammar instruction. Shrum and Glisan (2005) classify the progression of approaches to foreign language instruction according to the period in which each approach emerged.

One of the first documented approaches to foreign language instruction was the grammar-translation method. This method was the preferred method of instruction until the turn of the twentieth century. The approach was employed in the teaching of both Greek and Latin and stressed translation, the study of grammar rules, and rote learning of vocabulary terms (41). The

development of grammatical proficiency was a central focus of this method. Specifically, the grammar-translation method strove to develop students' ability to identify grammatical elements of the target language using the correct metalinguistic, or grammatical, terminology.

Beginning in the 1940s, the focus of language instruction shifted with the introduction of the audiolingual method. This approach aimed to develop students' proficiency in the areas of listening and speaking through the use of "stimulus-response learning: repetition, dialogue memorization, and manipulation of grammatical pattern drills" (41). In contrast to the grammar-translation method, language teachers using the audiolingual method were not expected to devote large amounts of class time to explicit grammar instruction. Instead, learners received structured grammatical input through the use of repetition, dialogues, and pattern drills. Due to the high priority placed on this type of stimulus-response learning, the majority of student speech was not spontaneous, but rather tended to be quite scripted and unnatural.

The cognitive approach of the 1960s encouraged "more meaningful language use and creativity" (41). In this view, it was thought that students ought to become familiar with the grammatical rules of the target language before trying to converse in that language. As a result, the cognitive approach placed a heavy emphasis on the teaching of grammar.

Finally, in the 1970s language education shifted to an emphasis on improving students' ability to effectively communicate in the target language. Proficiency-oriented instruction (Omaggio, 1986) emerged from the communicative competence ideology and stressed the importance of being able to use the target language to communicate in authentic contexts.

As the emphasis in language education has shifted toward developing students' communicative competence, questions have been raised concerning the importance of grammar instruction in the foreign language classroom. If the emphasis in foreign language education has

shifted to developing students' capacity to communicate in the language in real world situations, is grammar instruction necessary? Is the development of students' grammatical competence important in a communicative context? Indeed, many authors stress the importance of grammatical competence in developing communicative competence (Long, 1983; Chastain, 1987; Terrell, 1991; Mohammed, 1996; Norris & Ortega, 2000; Ellis, 2002).

Long (1983) evaluates the results from a number of previous studies concerning both instructed and naturalistic L2 learners. He presents evidence which shows that in general instructed L2 learners attain a higher degree of grammatical competence than naturalistic L2 learners. Based on the experiential evidence offered in his review, Long concludes that substantial support exists that indicates that grammar instruction is helpful: (1) for both children and adult learners, (2) for learners of all proficiency levels, (3) on both integrative and discrete-point assessments, and (4) in both acquisition-rich and acquisition-poor contexts (359). Thus, Long concludes that grammar instruction plays an important role in language learning. This conclusion suggests that, contrary to Krashen's view of grammar instruction, the teaching of grammar plays a significant role in learning a foreign language.

Based on his own experience as a language instructor, Chastain (1987) argues that grammar instruction can aid learners in cultivating their ability to communicate in a second language. He suggests that grammar explanations that are clear and succinct can act as advance organizers and help learners to better grasp the language items that are presented in the classroom. He concludes by advocating that instructors provide opportunities for students to develop both grammatical and communicative competence. While Chastain suggests a number of interesting possibilities concerning the role of grammar instruction in developing

communicative competence, he does not provide any empirical support for his conclusions. As a result, these conclusions should be considered with caution.

Terrell (1991) points to some informal evidence that seems to indicate that adult language learners do not necessarily utilize input to construct a grammar as children do. Consequently, he argues that adult language learners would benefit from grammar instruction within a communicative context:

We do not know whether students who are restricted to a classroom environment could acquire a verb system as complex as the Romance language systems without EGI [explicit grammar instruction] given their necessarily limited amount of exposure to input. My impression is that grammar-focused activities are necessary and that classroom students will not come close to the number of hours of input necessary for natural acquisition. (60)

In his view, grammar instruction helps adult students in acquiring language by serving as an advance organizer and an input organizer. However, an examination of the study shows that Terrell does not provide any experiential evidence to confirm his view that grammar instruction is helpful in L2 learning. Therefore, these claims must be viewed with caution.

Mohammed (1996) also emphasizes the importance of grammar instruction in foreign language education. He contrasts naturalistic language learning and classroom language learning contexts, pointing to the difference in learners' contact time with the language. Due to a lack of contact time with the language faced by students in the language classroom, Mohammed argues that grammar instruction could help these students by "supplementing the learners' natural hypotheses formation and verification process" (284). However, no experimental evidence is provided to lend support to this claim.

In a recent investigation, Norris and Ortega (2000) conducted a meta-analysis of 49 experimental and quasi-experimental studies examining the effectiveness of L2 instruction. The meta-analysis was motivated by the authors' assessment that in spite of the fact that individual studies may boast a large sample size or an intricate research design, a meta-analysis of studies

concerning the effectiveness of L2 instruction could offer results with higher validity than one study alone could supply. Although the meta-analysis sought to answer a total of six research questions, for the purposes of this study it is important to examine the following two general research questions put forth by the authors: (1) “How effective is L2 instruction overall and relative to simple exposure or meaning-driven communication?” and (2) “What is the relative effectiveness of different types and categories of L2 instruction?” (428).

In order to answer these questions, Norris and Ortega synthesized seventy-seven experimental and quasi-experimental studies by first classifying these studies according to the approach to L2 instruction employed in each. Next, the researchers quantitatively summarized the results obtained from these investigations. Then, the average effect size of each study was analyzed in order to gauge the extent to which the various approaches to L2 instruction were successful. Finally, confidence intervals were calculated in order to measure the statistical reliability of the results obtained in each study.

Results from the synthesis of studies showed that focused instruction generally gave rise to considerable increases in the learning of linguistic targets. Moreover, the analysis confirmed the general usefulness of grammar instruction in language learning. The quantitative meta-analysis conducted by Norris and Ortega adds to the body of knowledge concerning the effectiveness of L2 instruction by creating a replicable synthesis of collective data regarding this important question.

Ellis (2002) presents an examination of research concerning the effects of form-focused instruction on the acquisition of implicit knowledge. In order to determine whether form-focused instruction contributes to the acquisition of implicit knowledge, Ellis analyzed eleven studies that sought to look at the effect of form-focused instruction on learners’ communicative

free production. Although the studies varied according to different characteristics such as the age of participants and the instructional environment (e.g., immersion, university level courses), all studies shared a common variable. That is, all participants had achieved a level of language proficiency that allowed them the ability to communicate in free-production tasks. Given that learners' communicative free production was the measure of acquisition of implicit knowledge, it was essential for all students to be able to communicate in free-production tasks.

The eleven studies were analyzed according to six different groupings: (1) the effectiveness of instruction, (2) the age of participants, (3) the nature of the linguistic target, (4) the scope of the treatment, (5) the type of instruction, and (6) the measure of acquisition (e.g., oral vs. written activities) (229). Contrary to the view espoused by Krashen (1981, 1993) that form-focused instruction is capable of contributing only to learned, explicit knowledge, the analysis presented by Ellis offers evidence that form-focused instruction contributes to both learned and acquired knowledge. Although form-focused instruction did not prove to be effective in all of the studies (four of the studies failed to provide support for the assertion that form-focused instruction contributes to acquired knowledge), Ellis concludes that the noticing of target structures plays a central role in L2 learning by affecting both explicit and implicit knowledge.

These authors agree then that grammar instruction and the development of grammatical competency can help to develop students' language skills and communicative competence. Although it can be concluded that grammar instruction can be beneficial for adult L2 learners, the debate centering on the most beneficial approach to presenting grammar continues. Mohammed (1996) distinguishes between three different types of grammar: learner, reference, and pedagogical. Learner's grammar signifies a grammar that has been constructed by the

learner through the process of detecting grammatical patterns and creating hypotheses concerning the grammatical rules that govern those patterns. In contrast, reference grammar seeks to explain language as completely as possible, often through the use of grammatical analysis and metalinguistic terminology. Pedagogical grammar denotes a grammar that has been reduced in scope in order to create simple explanations that students can grasp.

Due to its similarity to learner's grammar, Mohammed concludes that informal pedagogical grammar may be the most effective form of grammar instruction. In this approach, grammar is reduced in scope and is explained using a minimum of metalinguistic terms. According to Mohammed, metalinguistic terms simply encumber the learning process because students must be familiar with the terminology in order to understand the grammar rules that will then help them to practice and learn the language. In this way, learning becomes a three step process: (1) learn the meanings of the grammar terms, (2) learn the grammar rules, (3) apply those rules in order to communicate in the language. But if the terms being used in foreign language textbooks are the same traditional grammar terms that have been used in English grammar textbooks for years, shouldn't students be familiar with them?

In keeping with this question, Vande Berg (1999) conducted a survey to explore students' familiarity with metalinguistic terms. The survey examined 110 beginning French learners' knowledge of ten common grammatical terms. The participants were asked to identify one specific grammatical element in each of ten sentences. The results from the survey reveal that the largest group of survey participants ($n = 27$, approximately one-fourth of the students) gave correct responses to only four out of the ten questions. Furthermore, the results show that the mean of correct answers given by the 110 beginning French learners was 4.34 and that less than half of the students pinpointed the correct grammatical element in seven out of the ten sentences

(647). Data from the Vande Berg survey implies that some language students might not understand the meaning of even the most basic grammatical notions such as *verb* or *subject* (647). Thus, Vande Berg exposes the disparity between the grammar explanations laden with metalinguistic terminology that are often presented in first-year foreign language texts and learners' comprehension of these explanations.

Vande Berg concludes that results from her survey have implications for foreign language education. She proposes two opposing approaches for incorporating implications of her study into the language classroom. First, based on the findings revealed in the survey, she suggests that one possible implication may be that when teaching a lesson on grammar, foreign language teachers should start the lesson with an examination of the grammatical feature in English in order to ensure that students understand the terminology used in the lesson. Then the teacher could go on to examine the grammatical feature in the second language being studied. Nevertheless, Vande Berg acknowledges that this approach might not be suitable for a foreign language course, and thus proposes a second, somewhat contradictory, approach to integrating implications of her survey into the classroom. She suggests that it may be appropriate for foreign language teachers to stop using textbooks that focus heavily on grammar, and instead opt for methods that minimize grammar instruction. However, this suggestion must be considered with caution. To propose that grammar should be avoided simply because learners do not understand the terminology used in explaining it seems unfounded. More research is needed in order to determine the effects of instruction of metalinguistic terminology on student performance on grammar tasks in the L2.

Thus, my investigation seeks to find answers for the following research questions: (1) Do beginning level French textbooks use metalinguistic terminology to explain how to form the

passé composé and *imparfait* French tenses? Which metalinguistic terms are used? Do the textbooks provide explanations as to the meaning of these terms? (2) Are students familiar with metalinguistic terminology? Can students identify the following elements in a series of sentences in their L1: adjective, adverb, auxiliary verb, conjugated verb, definite article, direct object, indirect object, past participle, prefix, preposition, root word, subject pronoun and suffix? (3) Do students who receive instruction on the meaning of English grammar terms (e.g., *auxiliary verb*, *past participle*) perform better on exercises designed to test their ability to form the *passé composé* and *imparfait* forms in French? In order to answer these research questions, I have conducted a three-fold investigation consisting of (1) a content analysis, (2) a survey, and (3) an experimental study.

First, an analysis of grammar presentations contained in four beginning level French textbooks was conducted. The goal of the content analysis was to examine (1) the amount and type of metalinguistic terminology contained in the presentation of how to form the *passé composé* and *imparfait* French tenses and (2) the degree to which these terms are explained. It was hypothesized that all of the textbooks would use metalinguistic terminology in presenting the grammar. However, few, if any, of the textbooks would provide explanations as to the meaning of the metalinguistic terms. Chapter 2 provides the results of the content analysis.

Second, to investigate the extent of first semester French students' knowledge of grammatical terminology, a survey of ninety-five students was conducted. The researcher conjectured that generally, students would be unfamiliar with metalinguistic terminology. However, it was posited that students with significant (4+ years) exposure to the study of another language would be more familiar with metalinguistic terminology than students who had not studied a foreign language for a significant period of time.

Finally, an experimental study was conducted in order to examine the effect of instruction of grammatical terms on students' ability to form the French *passé composé* and *imparfait*. The researcher hypothesized that students who received instruction on metalinguistic terminology (e.g., *auxiliary verb*, *past participle*) would perform better on the posttest than the group that did not receive the instruction.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the methodology used to conduct both the survey and experimental study, while Chapter 4 provides the results of both survey and study. Finally, Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the limitations of this study and the conclusions that can be drawn from the study.

CHAPTER 2

CONTENT ANALYSIS

Most foreign language textbooks espouse the view that grammar instruction and the development of grammatical competence can help to develop students' language skills and communicative competence. Many textbooks use traditional grammatical terms to explain grammar rules. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the grammar presentations provided by several different introductory French language textbooks concerning how to form both the *passé composé* and *imparfait* tenses. Table 2-1 displays the metalinguistic terms used in the grammar explanations of these language textbooks.

Chez Nous, an introductory French textbook, provides deductive grammar instruction by presenting students with explanations of essential French grammatical concepts. The grammar is presented in English with examples given in French. Activities are included after the grammar explanation in which students advance from “skill-developing to skill-using activities” (xi). That is to say, students begin with several form-focused practice exercises and then proceed to activities that are increasingly meaning-focused, thereby integrating the development of communicative competence.

In its presentation of the *passé composé*, the text employs several grammar terms. For example, the presentation of the *passé composé* begins by explaining: “To express an action completed in the past, use the **passé composé**. The **passé composé** is composed of an auxiliary, or helping verb, and the past participle of the verb that expresses the action. Usually, the present tense of **avoir** is the helping verb” (192). The book then provides several examples of the *passé composé* with the auxiliary verbs and past participles highlighted in boldface. While the book does employ techniques such as these to draw students’ attention to important concepts, it never defines the grammar terms that are used. Beginning language learners may become frustrated

with grammar presentations such as these that make use of unfamiliar terminology without explaining the meaning of these terms.

The explanation of the *imparfait* offered in *Chez Nous* differs from the book's presentation of the *passé composé* in terms of the number of grammar terms present in the explanation. The short description of how to form the imperfect tense simply states: "To form the **imparfait**, drop the **-ons** ending of the **nous** form of the present tense and add the **imparfait** endings. The only exception to this rule is the verb **être**, which has an irregular stem, **ét-**, as shown below" (250). Next, the book supplies a chart which displays a number of examples of the *imparfait* with the imperfect stems and endings printed in boldface. In this explanation, the textbook employs only two metalinguistic terms (*tense* and *verb*), as opposed to the many terms employed in the explanation of the *passé composé*.

Portes ouvertes, a textbook designed for use in first-year French classes, follows what the authors call an "inductive-deductive" approach to teaching grammar (xvi). Generally when introducing a grammar lesson, the book first supplies several examples of the new structure, inviting students to try to work out for themselves the grammar rules that govern the structure. This is the inductive half of the method. The deductive part of the approach, in which the structure is presented explicitly, appears after the initial set of examples.

The book's discussion of the *passé composé* includes many grammatical terms, but nowhere in the discussion does the book provide an explanation of the meaning of these terms. For example, the lesson introduces the *passé composé* in this way: "In French, as in English, there are several ways to talk about the past. One of the most common is to use the compound past, called the **passé composé**. The compound past has two parts: the helping verb (**le verbe auxiliaire**) and the past participle (**le participe passé**)" (327). This lesson explains that the

compound past has two parts (a helping verb and a past participle), but the text does not clarify the meanings of these terms.

Below this brief introduction, examples of the *passé composé* are provided in the form of an exchange between three people. For example, the first sentence of the exchange reads: “Alors, Arnaud, est-ce que **tu as acheté** des cadeaux pour ta famille?” (327). The examples of the *passé composé* are highlighted in boldface and students are asked to find the helping verb and to try to discover how the past participles of regular verbs are formed. The grammar explanation then resumes, stating: “As you can see, **avoir** is used as a helping verb for verbs in the **passé composé**” (327). This explanation serves to identify one of the verbs that can be used as a helping verb in forming the *passé composé*, but does not explain the actual meaning of the term *helping verb*.

The book then provides one example each of how to form the past participle of -er, -ir, and -re verbs. There is no explicit description of how to form the past participle; only the three examples are provided, and no explanation is given concerning the meaning of the term *past participle*. Finally, the *passé composé* is defined using the following formula: “**SUJET + VERBE AUXILIAIRE + PARTICIPE PASSÉ**” (328). Notice that this definition consists entirely of grammatical terms in French that are never overtly defined.

In contrast to the many metalinguistic terms used in presenting the *passé composé*, the book’s presentation of the formation of the *imparfait* uses relatively few metalinguistic terms. Only the terms *present tense* and *verb* are used in explaining how to form the *imparfait*: “To form the **imparfait**, replace the **-ons** ending of the **nous** form of the present tense with the imperfect endings: **-ais, -ais, -ait, -ions, -iez, -aient**. The verb **parler** is used as an example in the following table” (385). However, neither the notion of *tense* nor the term *verb* is defined

within the presentation. This lack of explanation may cause difficulty for students in trying to understand the book's explanation of the imperfect tense.

The beginning-level French textbook, *Parallèles*, presents grammar explicitly and often divides the more complicated grammar lessons into several brief lessons in order to make the material more manageable for students. Practice exercises are found at the end of each lesson and range from exercises that center on simply manipulating a particular grammatical feature to exercises that focus on both grammar and meaning. In this text, as in the texts that were discussed earlier, many grammatical terms are employed without providing an explanation as to the meaning of those terms. For example, the explanation of the formation of the *passé composé* with *avoir* opens with the following statement: "The *passé composé* is a compound tense formed with two elements: an auxiliary, or helping, verb + a past participle" (184). Many students may be unfamiliar with the terms *compound tense*, *auxiliary verb*, *helping verb*, and *past participle*. Nonetheless, the text makes use of these terms without explaining their meaning. The explanation continues: "Most French verbs use the auxiliary verb **avoir**. Although it is used to form a past tense verb, the auxiliary verb is conjugated in the present tense" (184). Here, the book explains that one particular verb, the verb *avoir*, can be used as an auxiliary verb in forming the *passé composé*, yet there is no definition provided as to the meaning of the term *auxiliary verb*. In the same way, the book provides several charts and examples of how to form the past participle, but never defines what is meant by the term *past participle*.

The lesson on the formation of the *imparfait* offered in *Parallèles* makes use of a small number of metalinguistic terms, compared with the number of terms used in the book's lesson on the formation of the *passé composé*. Among those used in the lesson on the imperfect are the terms *simple tense*, *present tense*, *verb*, and *infinitive*. For example, the description of how to

form the French imperfect tense starts with the following statement: “The *imparfait* is a simple tense consisting of a stem + endings. To find the stem, remove **–ons** from the **nous**-form of the present tense verb, and add the following imperfect endings, which are the same for *all* French verbs...” (294). The book then provides a chart which displays the *imparfait* endings. Notice that, as was the trend in the textbooks that were examined earlier, there is no definition provided for any of the metalinguistic terms used in the lesson.

The beginning French textbook *J'veux bien* differs slightly from the other textbooks examined due to the emphasis that the program places on student-mediated grammar instruction. The program is made up of two textbooks; one is designed for use within the classroom, while the other is intended for use outside of the classroom. The latter text contains all of the grammar explanations, thus shifting the responsibility of grammar instruction onto the student. Each grammar explanation provides several examples of the grammatical structure in question as well as an explicit presentation of the grammar in English. The explanation is followed by a number of mechanical exercises.

The grammar presentation on the *passé composé* provided in the out-of-class text begins with a dialogue in French that offers contextualized examples of the past tense. Each of the examples is highlighted in boldface and examples of the *passé composé* with both *avoir* and *être* are provided. The explanation then begins: “In French, to talk about actions that occurred in the past, you use the past tense called the **passé composé** (*compound past*). This tense is called ‘compound’ because it is made up of two parts: a *helping or auxiliary verb*, which agrees with the subject, and a *past participle*” (145). The book succeeds in explaining the meaning of the term *compound tense*, but does not provide an explanation of the terms *helping verb*, *auxiliary verb*, or *past participle*. Moreover, the book does not review the meaning of the term *subject*. In

fact, nowhere in the text is an explicit definition of the term provided. Due to the fact that explicit grammar instruction is student-mediated in this program, it is surprising that the text does not overtly explain the meaning of these terms.

The lesson concerning the imperfect tense follows the same format that is used for the lesson on the *passé composé*. First, contextualized examples of the imperfect tense are provided in the form of a short narrative. Then the examples are followed by a brief explanation of how to form the past tense. The amount of metalinguistic terminology used in the explanation is minimal, as is apparent in the book's description of how to form the *imparfait*: "To form the imperfect, begin with the **nous** form of the present tense, drop the **-ons** ending, and add the endings **-ais, -ais, -ait, -ions, -iez, -aient**. This rule applies to all French verbs except **être**, which has the irregular stem **ét-** (the endings remain the same, however)" (261). A chart presenting examples of the *imparfait* appears below this description. However, as was the tendency among the other first-year French textbooks that were examined earlier, this book generally does not provide an explanation or a review of the meanings of the metalinguistic terms that are employed in its grammar presentations.

In the four textbooks examined, many of the same metalinguistic terms were included in the explanations of the formation of the *passé composé* and *imparfait* French tenses. Out of all of the terminology that was used in the explanations of both the *passé composé* and the *imparfait*, only three concepts (*gender*, *number*, and *compound tense*) were defined. All other metalinguistic terms were never explicitly defined. The lack of explanation of terms provided in first-year texts leads then to the following questions: Do students understand the metalinguistic terminology contained in the grammar presentations of their textbooks? To what extent are

students familiar with these terms? The next chapter explains the methodology used in a survey that was conducted in an attempt to find answers to these questions.

Table 2-1. Metalinguistic terminology used in the grammar explanations of four beginning level French texts

	<i>Chez Nous</i>	<i>Portes ouvertes</i>	<i>Parallèles</i>	<i>J'veux bien</i>
auxiliary verb	✓	✓	✓	✓
helping verb	✓	✓	✓	✓
past participle	✓	✓	✓	✓
verb	✓	✓	✓	✓
present tense	✓	✓	✓	✓
infinitive	✓		✓	✓
conjugated verb	✓	✓	✓	✓
gender	✓		✓	✓ *
number	✓		✓	✓ *
subject	✓	✓	✓	✓
pronominal verb	✓		✓	✓
noun	✓			
compound past / compound tense		✓ *	✓	✓ *
subject pronoun			✓	
adverb			✓	
reflexive pronoun			✓	✓
reflexive verb			✓	
simple tense			✓	
adjective				✓

✓ = Term employed in grammar explanation

* = Definition of term provided

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study is two-fold. First, the study seeks to determine the extent of first semester French students' knowledge of grammatical terminology. In order to investigate the extent to which students are familiar with metalinguistic terminology, a survey of ninety-five beginning French learners was conducted. The first section of this chapter describes that survey.

The second goal of the study is to determine the effect of instruction of grammatical terms on students' ability to understand L2 grammar. An experimental study was conducted to investigate whether students who receive instruction on the meaning of English grammar terms (e.g., *auxiliary verb*, *past participle*) perform better on exercises designed to test their ability to form the *passé composé* and *imparfait* forms in French. The second section of this chapter reports on the method used in conducting the experimental study.

Survey

During the first phase of the study, a survey was conducted to establish participants' knowledge of grammatical terms. The survey was adapted from Camille Kennedy Vande Berg's survey (1999). The questionnaire aimed to test participants on terms that they would likely come across in the grammar explanations provided in their foreign language textbook. This questionnaire was selected in order to compare this study's findings with those presented in Vande Berg and to observe whether the results obtained in this study would support or undermine Vande Berg's findings.

A few additional items (e.g., Name, E-mail address) were added to Part 1 of the survey. These items were added in order to solicit more information from survey participants. In addition to the extra items in Part 1, three sentences were added to the ten sentences in Part 2 of the Vande Berg questionnaire. The three sentences were added in order to test participants'

knowledge of the terms *prefix*, *suffix*, and *root word*, terms that may be employed when explaining how to form the French *passé composé* and *imparfait*.

Participants

The participants in the survey were ninety-five students (34 males, 61 females) enrolled in beginning French at the University of Florida. Table 3-1 displays characteristics of the survey participants. The background information section of the survey showed that thirteen of the ninety-five students (13.7 %) had a native language other than English. Two students listed both English and one other language (Italian and Spanish) as native languages. Sixty-one of the ninety-five students (64.2 %) had previously studied Spanish, twenty-four (25.3 %) had studied French, six (6.3 %) had studied Latin, five (5.3 %) had studied German, three (3.2 %) had studied Italian, two (2.1 %) had studied Arabic, two (2.1 %) had studied Greek, one (1.1 %) had studied Hebrew and one (1.1 %) had studied Swedish.

Materials

Survey participants were provided with a short questionnaire in which they were requested to identify a specific part of speech in a particular sentence (e.g., *Sentence 1: We often write to them about our classes. Circle the subject pronoun in sentence 1.*) The questionnaire consisted of thirteen sentences. To view the complete survey, please see Appendix A. Surveys were scored by hand and learners were assessed by the number of parts of speech that they correctly identified.

Procedure

In order to gain an idea of the amount of knowledge that first-semester French learners have of the specialized language of grammar, these learners were asked to participate in a brief survey. Due to the fact that the surveys were conducted during the second week of classes, the survey was written in English in order to control for student comprehension in French.

Additionally, as Vande Berg asserts, many first-year French texts present grammar in English (646). As a result, many students come across English, rather than French, terms in the explanations of grammar provided by these first-year French primers. According to Vande Berg, the survey was created to be clear and straight-forward with all sentences centering on the subject of education and college life (646). This topic was chosen in an effort to help the participants of the study (university students) connect with the context of the sentences contained in the survey.

Students from five beginning level French classes were asked to participate in the survey. To control for feelings of coercion among the students, the researcher did not ask her own students to participate in the survey. In accordance with the policies of the Institutional Review Board at the University of Florida, prior to receiving the survey, the students who were asked to participate were informed that their participation in the study was completely voluntary and they did not have to answer any question that they did not wish to answer. Appendix B contains a copy of the Informed Consent form that all students had to sign in order to participate in the survey.

Experimental Study

The second part of the study was experimental in nature. It was designed to examine any effects that the instruction of grammatical terminology may have on students' ability to understand L2 grammar. The goal of the experiment was to compare two groups of students (the experimental group, in which students received instruction on the meaning of English grammar terms, e.g., *auxiliary verb*, *past participle*, and the control group, in which students did not receive instruction on the meaning of these terms). Both groups were instructed on how to form two French past tenses (the *passé composé* and the *imparfait*) and both were given a posttest to gauge how well they were able to form these tenses.

Participants

The participants selected for the study had to demonstrate a low level of metalinguistic knowledge, as it was hypothesized that instruction of metalinguistic vocabulary would aid students in their ability to form both the *passé composé* and the *imparfait*. If participants already had a high level of metalinguistic knowledge, instruction of grammatical terminology would likely have no effect on their ability to form the two past tenses. Secondly, due to the fact that students in both the experimental and control groups were given a lesson in French grammar, study participants were required to be enrolled in Beginning French 1, an introductory French course for students with little to no experience in French. Undoubtedly, students with an advanced or even intermediate level knowledge of French would have had an advantage on the posttest. Finally, it was thought that study participants should be native English speakers in order to control for comprehension of the two lessons given in English and the posttests, which were written in English.

Of the ninety-five students who participated in the survey, twenty-nine were found to have low metalinguistic knowledge. In this study, students were identified as having low metalinguistic knowledge if they answered incorrectly seven or more of the thirteen questions included in the survey. Of the twenty-nine students demonstrating low metalinguistic knowledge, twenty-four students (twelve male and twelve female students) qualified to participate in the study. In addition to low metalinguistic knowledge, all study participants were enrolled in French 1130: Beginning French 1 and were native speakers of English. Participants were selected based on these criteria in order to control for these variables. Of the twenty-four students who qualified, nine (five male and four female) students chose to take part in the study. Table 3-2 displays characteristics of the study participants.

Materials

A set of scripts and PowerPoint presentations was used to teach the lesson on grammatical terminology and the lesson on the formation of the *passé composé* and the *imparfait*. Scripts were employed in order to control for differences in teaching style of the two instructors who administered the study. Furthermore, the scripts allowed the instructors to communicate all of the necessary information to participants without having to know the objective of the study. This helped to control for instructor bias. The scripts used to teach the lessons can be found in Appendix C.

The PowerPoint slide shows were used to teach both the lesson on grammatical terminology and the lesson on the formation of the *passé composé* and the *imparfait*. They were intended to provide participants with explanations and examples of the grammar in a controlled manner. The PowerPoint slides were designed to control for any variation between the two groups (control and experimental) that the instructor might introduce into the lessons.

The goal of the PowerPoint presentation on grammatical terminology was to explain the meaning of the terms *compound verb*, *auxiliary verb*, and *past participle*. This PowerPoint presentation can be found in Appendix C. A definition was given for each term and examples in both English and French were provided in order to illustrate the meaning of these terms. The following definition was given for the term *compound verb*: “A compound verb is a two-verb structure constructed from (1) a conjugated auxiliary verb and (2) a main verb.” Following this explanation, several examples of compound verbs were provided. All of the compound verbs were highlighted in boldface and explicitly identified for the students.

The next three slides contained in the PowerPoint presentation offered an explanation of the term *auxiliary verb* within the context of the perfect tense in English. A definition of the perfect tense was provided as well as an explanation of how to form the perfect tense in English.

Numerous examples were supplied to illustrate the function of the auxiliary verb in the perfect tense in English and the *passé composé* in French. The term *past participle* was also presented within the context of the English perfect tense and was defined by the *Compact Oxford English Dictionary of Current English* as “the form of a verb, typically ending in –ed in English, which is used in forming perfect and passive tenses and sometimes as an adjective.” Examples of past participles were given within the context of both the English perfect tense and the French *passé composé*.

The PowerPoint presentation on the *passé composé* and the *imparfait* aimed to explain to participants how to form these two past tenses. The presentation followed the same format used in the French textbook, *Chez Nous*, as this is the textbook used in beginning level French classes at the University of Florida. In the explanation of the *passé composé* provided by *Chez Nous*, terms such as *auxiliary verb* and *past participle* appear, followed by many examples to illustrate how the tense is formed. *Chez Nous*' explanation of the *imparfait* uses the term *imparfait stem* along with several examples to explain how to form the imperfect tense. Since the lesson centered on the formation of these two French past tenses, all examples provided in the PowerPoint were in French followed by their English translation.

Control group participants received explicit instruction on the formation of the *passé composé* and the *imparfait*. Consequently, participants in the control group received only one lesson. In contrast, the experimental group was presented with two lessons. The first presentation supplied participants in the experimental group with explicit instruction on the meaning of certain grammatical terms that were pertinent to the second lesson that they would receive. The second presentation was identical to that given to the control group. For both the control and experimental groups, the instructor presented the material by lecturing directly from the PowerPoint slide show.

Procedure

Control group

The control group ($n = 3$) received instruction on the formation of the *passé composé* and *imparfait* forms. In order to control for researcher bias, an impartial instructor taught the lesson. The instructor was a native speaker of Haitian Creole and French. Participants were not permitted to ask questions during this time, but they were permitted to take notes. They were then given an exercise to test their comprehension of how to form both of the past tenses. The control session, including the lecture and assessment, took about twenty-three minutes to complete.

Experimental group

The experimental group ($n = 6$) first received instruction on the metalinguistic terminology often used by first-year French textbooks to explain how to form the *passé composé* and the *imparfait*. In order to further control for researcher bias, a second instructor taught the lesson on metalinguistic terminology to the experimental group. The instructor was a native speaker of Arabic and French. In the lesson, participants were presented with such grammatical terms as *compound verb*, *auxiliary verb*, and *past participle*. These terms were defined and examples were given in both English and French to illustrate the definitions. Participants were not allowed to ask questions, but they were allowed to take notes. Following the lecture, participants were asked to complete an assessment to determine their ability to identify compound verbs, auxiliary verbs, and past participles in a series of sentences.

After receiving this instruction, the experimental group then received the same instruction that the control group received concerning the formation of the two past tenses. The same instructor who taught the lesson on the formation of the *passé composé* and the *imparfait* to the control group also taught the lesson to the experimental group. However, the instructor did not

know which group was the control group and which was the experimental group. Furthermore, the instructor was not informed of the objective of the study until after both groups had completed the experiment.

Explicit instruction of grammar in both groups was conducted primarily in English. Similar to the conditions set for the control group, participants in the experimental group were not allowed to ask questions during either of the two presentations that they received. However, they were allowed to take notes.

Finally, the experimental group completed the same exercise given to the control group to test their knowledge of how to form the *passé composé* and the *imparfait*. Data was coded according to the number of correct responses given. In total, the experimental session, including two lectures and the assessment, took about twenty-five minutes to complete.

Assessment

The assessment tools used to evaluate the control and experimental groups were made by the researcher in order to target the grammar concepts that were introduced in the study. The first assessment, that only the experimental group received, consisted of fifteen sentences grouped into three sections. In the first section, participants were asked to identify the compound verb in each sentence, followed by the second section which asked participants to identify the auxiliary verb, and the final section in which participants were asked to identify the past participle. The assessments were scored by hand and participants were assessed by the number of elements that they correctly identified. A copy of the assessment can be found in Appendix D.

In the assessment that both groups received, participants were supplied with seven present-tense sentences in French and were asked to put the sentences into both the *passé composé* and the *imparfait* (e.g., *Put the following sentence into the passé composé and the imparfait. Je parle*

français.) In this way, the assessment was able to isolate and test students on only these two forms. This format was selected in an attempt to attain a high level of face validity and to control for such factors as student memory of vocabulary items. The assessment asked participants to produce the written *passé composé* and *imparfait* forms; there was no oral component. The assessments were scored by hand and participants were assessed by the number of verbs that they correctly put into the past tense. Appendix D provides the assessment tool used to evaluate the participants in the study.

The next chapter presents the results of both the survey and the experimental study.

Table 3-1. Characteristics of survey participants

Gender	N	Percent (%)
Female	61	64.2 %
Male	34	35.8 %
Year of Birth		
1989	1	1.1 %
1988	16	16.8 %
1987	23	24.2 %
1986	19	20 %
1985	15	15.8 %
1984	10	10.5 %
1983	6	6.3 %
Earlier than 1983	4	4.2 %
No response	1	1.1 %
Previous Language Study*		
Spanish	61	64.2 %
French	24	25.3 %
Latin	6	6.3 %
German	5	5.3 %
Italian	3	3.2 %
Arabic	2	2.1 %
Greek	2	2.1 %
Hebrew	1	1.1 %
Swedish	1	1.1 %

*Note: Percentages do not equal 100 due to the fact that some participants studied more than one language prior to taking the survey.

Table 3-2. Characteristics of study participants

Gender	N	Percent (%)
Female	4	44.4 %
Male	5	55.6 %
L1		
English	9	100 %
Score on survey		
6	1	11.1 %
5	5	55.6 %
4	2	22.2 %
3	1	11.1 %

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

This chapter provides the results of both the survey and experimental study. In the first section, the survey results are presented, followed by a discussion of possible implications of the findings. The second section of the chapter offers the results of the experimental study as well as suggestions for future research.

Survey

The purpose of the survey was to investigate beginning French learners' level of familiarity with a variety of metalinguistic terms. As mentioned earlier, the survey used in this investigation was adapted from the survey created by Vande Berg (1999). The Vande Berg survey was adapted for use in this study in order to provide a measure of comparison of the results from the two studies.

Ninety-seven surveys were given to students in five sections of beginning French, FRE 1130, at the University of Florida. Of those surveys, ninety-five (98 %) were fully completed. The two incomplete surveys were not analyzed for use in this investigation.

Figure 4-1 shows the number of grammatical items that the ninety-five survey participants correctly identified. The responses given by the participants create a skewed bell curve, unlike the even bell-shaped curve presented in the Vande Berg study. The data collected from the survey produce this skewed bell curve due to the fact that the mode, that is the number of correct responses most frequently given by survey participants, was ten (out of a possible thirteen), with most participants falling to the right side of the chart. Consequently, the distribution of data is skewed to the right. The number of correct responses most frequently given by participants in the Vande Berg study was four (out of a possible ten), with most participants falling in the middle of the chart (647). Thus, the data from the Vande Berg study produce an even bell curve.

As for the results obtained in this study, the left side of the graph shows that none of the participants responded incorrectly to all of the questions, that is to say that all participants answered at least one question correctly. The right side of the graph shows that only two participants responded correctly to all thirteen questions. Fifteen of the ninety-five participants ($\approx 16\%$) responded correctly to ten of the thirteen questions. Among all ninety-five participants, the mean for the number of correctly identified grammatical terms was 7.63. The mean among the 110 participants in the Vande Berg study was 4.34.

In comparing the results from this study with those obtained in the Vande Berg study, it is important to note that the survey employed in this study contained an additional three questions that were not part of the Vande Berg survey. Clearly, it is possible that this addition could account for at least some of the differences apparent in the general comparison of results between the two studies. Consequently, it may be more helpful to compare the results of the two studies based on the percentages of participants that correctly answered the ten original questions contained in Vande Berg's survey. When the three supplementary questions are removed from the survey, the results reveal that the mean for the number of correctly identified grammatical terms was 5.35; a mean much closer to the mean of 4.34 reported in the Vande Berg study.

In order to compare the results of the two studies in more detail, let us briefly examine the findings of the Vande Berg study. Vande Berg's initial assumption was that survey participants (all enrolled in introductory French courses) would have a low degree of metalinguistic competence. She argues that this assumption was confirmed by the results of her survey, namely that for seven out of the ten questions included in the survey, less than half of the students responded correctly.

The survey conducted as part of this study was seemingly not able to corroborate Vande Berg's findings. The thirteen grammatical terms that were tested on the survey are presented in Table 4-1 and are categorized according to the percentage of participants who responded correctly to each. Results from the survey showed that more than half of the students correctly answered eight out of the thirteen survey questions. Nevertheless, if we were to remove the three extra questions in this survey concerning the terms *prefix*, *suffix*, and *root word*, only the ten questions original to Vande Berg's own survey would remain. In this case, we begin to witness results not unlike those found in Vande Berg's study.

Table 4-2 compares the results from the two studies based on the percentages of survey participants who correctly identified the ten grammatical terms originally examined in the Vande Berg study. This comparison is illustrated in the line graph in Figure 4-2. In both studies the term correctly identified most often was *adverb*. Eighty-four percent of participants identified the adverb in this study, while only seventy-seven percent of participants identified the adverb in the Vande Berg study. Ranking second in both studies was the term *adjective*. Seventy-eight percent of participants in this study and seventy-six percent in Vande Berg's study correctly identified the adjective.

The terms *subject pronoun* and *direct object* ranked third and fourth respectively in this study. Sixty-two percent of participants correctly identified the subject pronoun and sixty-one percent correctly identified the direct object. Vande Berg's survey results revealed the same trend. *Direct object* ranked third, with fifty-six percent of participants correctly identifying the term and *subject pronoun* ranked fourth, with forty-nine percent of participants correctly identifying this term.

Finally, the term *preposition* ranked fifth in both studies. Fifty-eight percent of participants in this study and forty-five percent of participants in the Vande Berg study demonstrated the ability to correctly identify the preposition. Although the percentages of students who responded correctly tended to be higher in this study than in Vande Berg's study, it is interesting to note that in both studies the same five grammatical terms were ranked in the top five of those that students were most often able to correctly identify. Although these results reveal that students generally performed better on this survey than those who participated in Vande Berg's survey, they present support for the claim that students are generally unfamiliar with metalinguistic terminology.

Results from the survey also provide at least some support for the hypothesis that students with significant (4+ years) exposure to the study of another language will be more familiar with metalinguistic terminology than students who have not studied a foreign language for a significant period of time. Twenty-nine of the ninety-five survey participants (31%) identified themselves as having studied a foreign language for four or more years. We will call this group the 4+ group. Figure 4-3 illustrates the number of survey questions that these twenty-nine students answered correctly. Figure 4-4 shows the number of questions answered correctly by participants who studied a foreign language for less than four years ($n = 63$). On three of the surveys the section in which students identify their years of foreign language study was left blank. Consequently, results from these three surveys are not included in the analysis that follows.

Figure 4-3 illustrates the results of the 4+ group. The graph is skewed to the right. This means that most of the twenty-nine participants in this group scored on the right side of the graph, answering more than half of the questions correctly. In fact, none of the twenty-nine

students scored a zero, one, two, or three on the survey; the lowest score was a four out of thirteen. Two students in this group scored a perfect thirteen out of thirteen. Seven participants (24%) responded correctly to ten of the thirteen survey questions. The mean for the 4+ group was 8.48.

Figure 4-4 represents participants with less than four years of previous foreign language study. This graph displays a more normally distributed set of results than the skewed distribution shown in Figure 4-3. Most of the students who make up this group scored on the right side of the graph, but many also scored on the left side, creating a more even distribution of scores than that of the 4+ group. For example, out of the sixty-three students with less than four years of previous foreign language study, ten identified nine out of the thirteen grammatical terms included in the survey. Yet, nine of these sixty-three students identified only five of the grammatical terms. The mean for participants with less than four years of language study was 7.32.

The group with less than four years of language study had a mode (9) and a mean (7.32), which was less than the mode (10) and mean (8.48) for the 4 + group. This provides at least some support for the hypothesis that students with significant exposure to the study of another language will be more familiar with grammatical terms than those who have not received the same exposure. Additional research is needed in order to offer more support for this claim. Future research would benefit from larger sample sizes in both groups. Furthermore, it may be interesting to investigate whether differences exist between students who have had one, two, or three years of language study.

Results from this survey, then, imply that many beginning language students do not know the meaning of many of the grammar terms employed in today's foreign language texts and

classrooms. While students who have studied a foreign language for several (4+) years may be able to recognize many of these terms, the majority of students are unable to identify many common grammatical terms. These findings beg the question, “What effect might instruction of metalinguistic terminology have on the ability of beginning learners to understand L2 grammar?” To help answer this question, let us turn to an analysis of the results collected from the experimental study.

Experimental Study

The goal of the experimental study was to explore the effect of instruction of metalinguistic terms on students’ comprehension of how to form the *passé composé* and *imparfait* forms in French as measured by their performance on a posttest. I hypothesized that students who received instruction on metalinguistic terminology (e.g., *auxiliary verb*, *past participle*) would perform better on the posttest than the group that did not receive the instruction.

Posttests were coded and scored by hand based on the number of questions that each participant answered correctly. The posttests were scored using two different sets of criteria. The first method of scoring awarded one point for every correct answer. The answer had to be completely correct to receive the point. For example in Number 5, one student provided the correct past participle *adoré* to form the *passé composé* of the verb *adorer*, but provided the incorrect auxiliary verb *être*. Consequently, no points were awarded for this response. Based on this method of scoring, the highest number of total possible points that a participant could receive was fourteen. This method of scoring was helpful in showing whether or not participants were able to fully understand and correctly produce the *passé composé* and the *imparfait*.

The second method of scoring awarded one point for each correct element that participants provided. As a result, in the first section of the posttest, students could earn between four and

five points per sentence. One point was awarded for each of the following elements: (1) supplying a compound verb, (2) supplying the correct auxiliary verb, (3) correctly conjugating the auxiliary verb, (4) correctly forming the past participle, and (5) correct placement of the *ne...pas* in negative sentences. In the second section of the posttest, participants could earn up to two points per sentence. One point was awarded for supplying the correct forms for both the imperfect stem and ending. Based on this method of scoring, participants could earn a total of up to forty-three points. This method of scoring allowed the researcher to pinpoint those elements for which participants were unable to supply the correct response.

The results were analyzed according to both the total number of questions that participants answered correctly and the total number of correct elements that participants included in their responses. The results are summarized in Table 4-3 and Table 4-4. Table 4-3 gives the mean scores for the number of questions answered correctly by participants in both the experimental and control groups. Table 4-4 shows the mean scores for the number of correct elements given by participants in each group.

Both methods of scoring revealed the same results. The control group yielded a higher mean score than did the experimental group both overall and on the *passé composé* section of the assessment, while the experimental group delivered a higher mean score on the *imparfait* section. It is difficult to speculate why there was this difference in mean scores between the two groups. However, due to the low number of participants (the experimental group was made up of only six participants and the control group numbered even less at only three participants), there were not enough students in either group to be able to claim that the difference in test scores between the two groups was significant. Additional studies that include more experimental and control group participants are needed to determine whether these results are conclusive.

The results of this study imply that beginning French learners who receive instruction on metalinguistic terminology prior to receiving instruction on how to form the *passé composé* and *imparfait* French tenses perform as well as, but not necessarily better than, learners who do not receive instruction on metalinguistic terms. These findings may come as a result of the limitations of the lesson on metalinguistic terminology that the experimental group received. Only the targeted terms *compound verb*, *auxiliary verb*, and *past participle* were defined, although several other metalinguistic terms (e.g., *conjugated verb*, *passive tense*, *adjective*) were employed in the lesson. If participants were not familiar with the meanings of these terms, the lesson on metalinguistic terminology may not have been as beneficial to participants as was originally hypothesized. Therefore, future research should include definitions for all metalinguistic terminology used in the lessons in order to determine the effect of instruction of metalinguistic terms on students' comprehension of L2 grammar.

Before conducting the study, the original hypothesis was that the experimental group (those who received instruction on metalinguistic terminology prior to the lesson on the *passé composé* and *imparfait* forms) would perform considerably better than the control group (those who did not receive instruction on metalinguistic terminology) on both the *passé composé* and *imparfait* sections of the posttest. The experimental group did score higher than the control group on the *imparfait* section of the posttest, but scored lower than the control group on the *passé composé* section and attained a lower mean score overall. Still, as was previously mentioned, there were not enough participants in either group to be able to claim that the difference in the two groups' posttest scores was significant.

Since the lesson on the formation of the *passé composé* and *imparfait* tenses given to both the experimental and control groups contained several grammar rules and points to learn,

memory could have had an effect on the low overall mean scores for both groups. For example, in the first section of the posttest, students were expected to know which auxiliary verb to use in forming the *passé composé*. Similarly, in order to perform well on the second section of the posttest, students had to be familiar with the *imparfait* endings. In short, during the lesson participants were presented with a large amount of new information that they were required to process and commit to memory. As a result, even if students understood the grammar concepts being explained in the lesson, they may have performed poorly if they were unable to remember the rules when taking the posttest. In this way, memory may have had an effect on student performance on the posttest. Future studies may want to test for memory in order to control for this variable.

Additionally, given that the experimental group scored a mean of 9.33 questions correct out of a possible 15 on the assessment that tested their comprehension of the lesson on metalinguistic terminology, it is possible that participants in this group were not able to learn the meanings of the terms during the course of the lesson. Overall the participants in the experimental group responded correctly to only 62% of the questions on the first assessment. Clearly, the students were not able to master the grammatical concepts after only one lesson. It is likely that if the participants in the experimental group had been given additional lessons on the meaning of the metalinguistic terms, they would have eventually been able to master these concepts. Furthermore, it is possible that these additional lessons may have had an effect on participants' comprehension of the lesson on the formation of the *passé composé* and the *imparfait*. It would be interesting to investigate the effect of more than one instruction session on students' ability to form the *passé composé* and *imparfait*.

If, as the results from this study imply, instruction of grammar terms has no significant effect on student performance in the L2 grammar, then perhaps as Mohammed (1996) proposes, “A technique of teaching grammar that is based on the learner’s informal representation of linguistic knowledge may be more effective than the traditional technique based on the linguists’ description of language” (286). However, due to the fact that the results from this study are inconclusive, any implications that this study may have for foreign language teaching should be considered with caution.

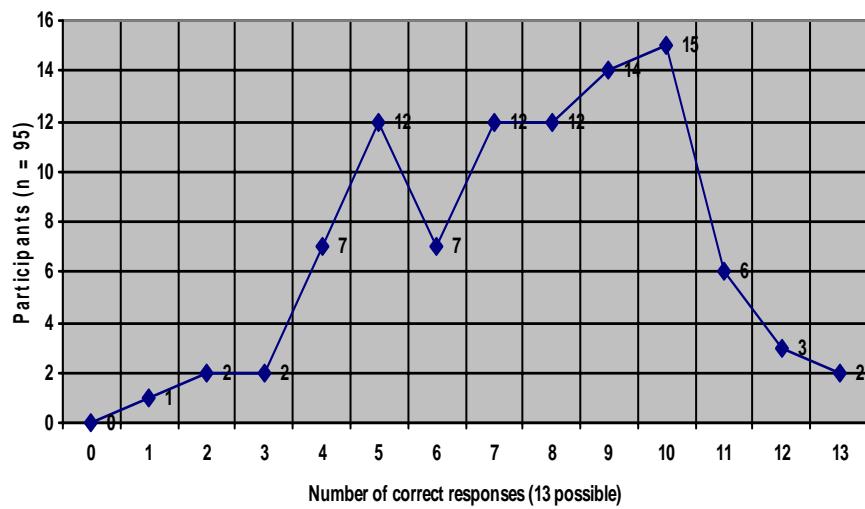


Figure 4-1. Number of grammatical items correctly identified by survey participants

Table 4-1. Percentage of survey participants able to correctly identify terms

Grammatical Term	Percentage
Adverb	84 %
[Tie] Adjective / Root word	78%
Prefix	76 %
Suffix	75%
Subject pronoun	62 %
Direct object	61 %
Preposition	58 %
Definite article	49 %
Conjugated verb	45 %
Auxiliary verb	38 %
Past participle	32 %
Indirect object	27 %

Table 4-2. Comparison of percentages of survey participants able to correctly identify terms

Present study		Vande Berg	
Grammatical term	Percentage	Grammatical term	Percentage
Adverb	84 %	Adverb	77 %
Adjective	78 %	Adjective	76 %
Subject pronoun	62 %	Direct object	56 %
Direct object	61 %	Subject pronoun	49 %
Preposition	58 %	Preposition	45 %
Definite article	49 %	Indirect object	36 %
Conjugated verb	45 %	Auxiliary verb	29 %
Auxiliary verb	38 %	[Tie] Definite article / Past participle	22 %
Past participle	32 %	--	--
Indirect object	27 %	Conjugated verb	19 %

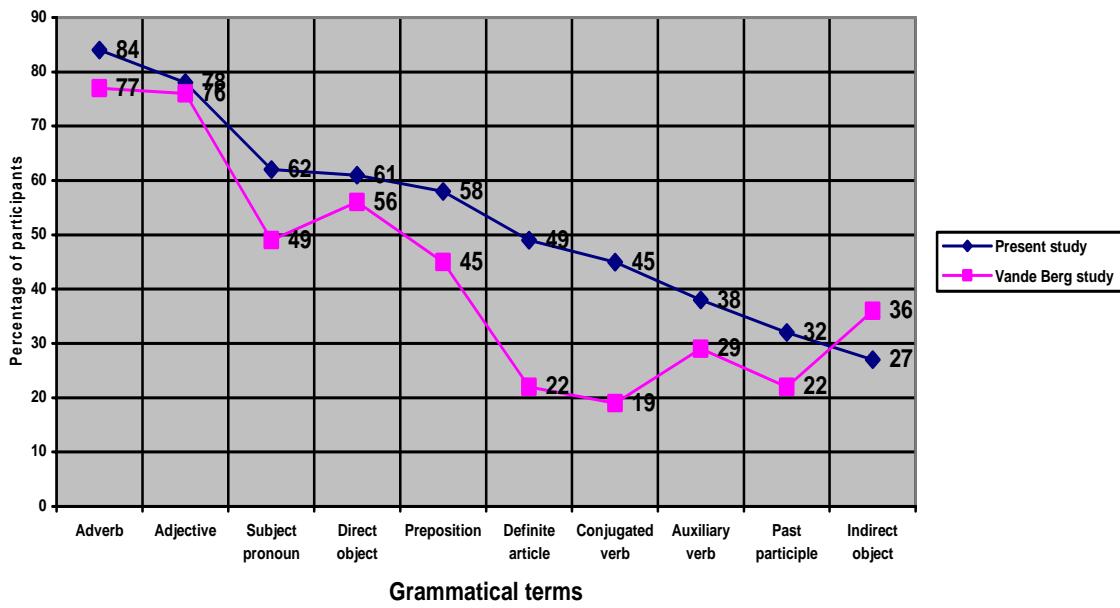


Figure 4-2. Comparison of percentages of survey participants able to correctly identify terms

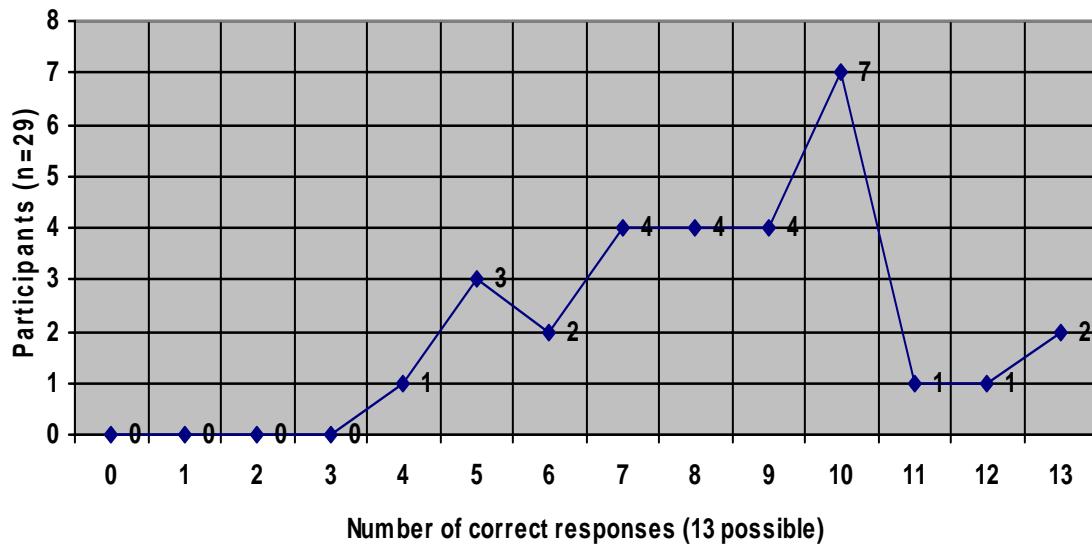


Figure 4-3. Number of grammatical items correctly identified by participants with four or more years of foreign language study

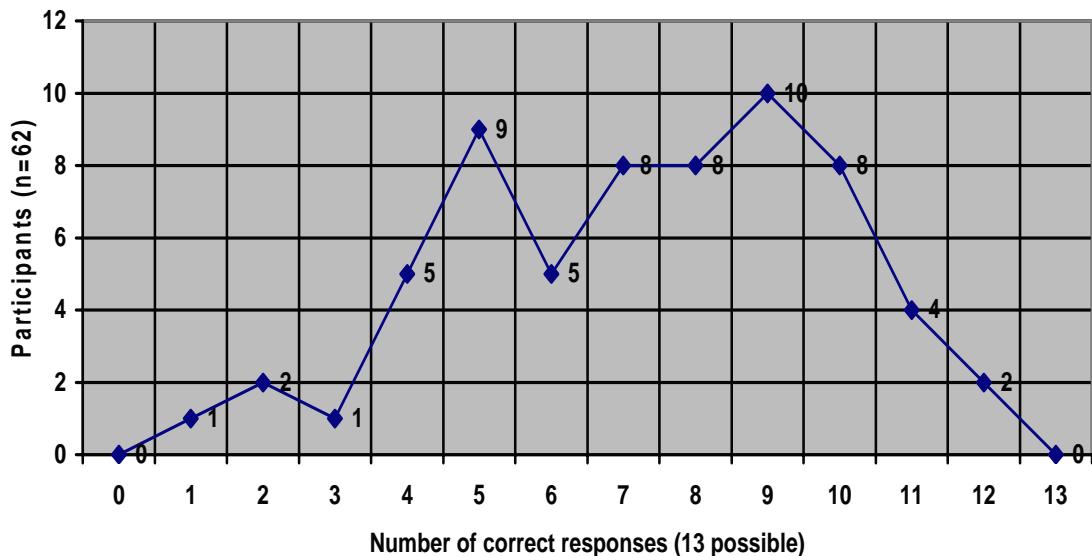


Figure 4-4. Number of grammatical items correctly identified by participants with less than four years of language study

Table 4-3. Mean scores of the total number of questions answered correctly

	Experimental group	Control group
Mean score (out of a possible 14 points)	4.83	5.00
Percentage correct	34.5%	35.7%
Passé composé mean score (out of a possible 7 points)	1.17	2.00
Percentage correct	16.7%	28.6%
Imparfait mean score (out of a possible 7 points)	3.67	3.00
Percentage correct	52.4%	42.9%

Table 4-4. Mean scores of the number of correct elements included in participant responses

	Experimental group	Control group
Mean score (out of a possible 43 points)	22.00	24.67
Percentage correct	51.2%	57.4%
Passé composé mean score (out of a possible 29 points)	12.50	16.33
Percentage correct	43.1%	56.3%
Imparfait mean score (out of a possible 14 points)	9.50	8.33
Percentage correct	67.9%	59.5%

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

The research presented in the literature review of this study concentrated on whether knowledge concerning L2 grammar is important in learning a foreign language. Based on this research, it was concluded that instruction of L2 grammar can be helpful in acting as an advance organizer in a classroom context where language input is not as readily available as it is in a natural context.

Next, the content analysis provided an examination of the way in which grammar is presented in a variety of beginning level French texts. All of the textbooks examined employed metalinguistic terminology in their presentations of grammar. However, in the majority of cases, the textbooks used these metalinguistic terms without providing accompanying definitions as to what the terms meant.

The survey that examined beginning French learners' knowledge of metalinguistic terminology provided insight into why grammar presentations that make use of metalinguistic terminology to explain L2 grammar can prove to be problematic for some students. Results from the survey revealed that participants were generally unfamiliar with metalinguistic terminology.

Finally, the experimental study examined the effect of instruction of grammatical terms often used in textbook grammar presentations. The results suggested that instruction of these terms may not significantly affect student performance in L2 grammar. However, further research is needed to corroborate these findings.

Any implications that this study may have for foreign language teaching must be viewed with caution as a result of a number of limitations in the research design. First, the number of participants in both the experimental and control groups was extremely low. With such a low number of participants, it is difficult to claim that the difference in posttest scores between the

two groups was significant. Moreover, it is difficult to speculate as to why there was a difference in posttest scores among the experimental and control groups. It is likely that an examination of all of the students who participated in the survey (rather than simply a small sample of the population) would yield findings different from those obtained in this study. This study assumed that only those students with low metalinguistic knowledge would benefit from instruction of metalinguistic terminology. However, it is possible that students with mid to high levels of metalinguistic knowledge may also benefit from this instruction. More research is needed to compare the effects of instruction of metalinguistic terminology on students with varied levels of metalinguistic knowledge.

Second, as was mentioned briefly in the Results chapter, the lesson on metalinguistic terminology focused on three metalinguistic terms (*compound verb*, *auxiliary verb*, and *past participle*). However, it has been noted that the term *auxiliary verb* was never explicitly defined anywhere in the PowerPoint presentation on metalinguistic terminology. Rather, much like the presentations of grammar contained in the first-year French textbooks examined in Chapter 2, the term was presented within the context of the English perfect tense and several examples were provided to illustrate the function of the auxiliary verb. Due to this weakness in the design of the presentation of metalinguistic terminology, this study is limited in its ability to examine the effect of instruction of the term *auxiliary verb* on students' ability to form the *passé composé*, as the term was never explicitly defined.

Additionally, although the lesson on metalinguistic terminology targeted three specific grammatical terms (*compound verb*, *auxiliary verb*, *past participle*), additional terms were employed in the explanation. Given that these additional terms were included but not defined, it is possible that students may have had difficulty in understanding the lesson. In this case, the

experimental and control conditions would not have differed enough to test for the effects of metalinguistic instruction. Future research should correct this limitation by verifying that definitions are provided for all metalinguistic terms used in the experimental condition.

Third, it is interesting to note that the control group completed the control session, including one lecture and one assessment, in twenty-three minutes, while the experimental group completed the experimental session, which included two lectures and two assessments, in only twenty-five minutes. In both sessions, students were allowed to leave as soon as they completed the assessments. The end of a session was operationalized as the time at which the last remaining student turned in his or her assessment. In the control group, one student continued to work on the assessment several minutes after the other participants had left. Conversely, before the experimental session began, several participants in the experimental group mentioned that they were under a time constraint due to other obligations. If participants felt rushed for time, it is possible that they hurried to complete the two assessments. Given these factors, it is possible that the difference in the duration of the two sessions could be a result of differences in the pace taken by participants in both the control and experimental groups to complete their assessments. Moreover, these differences in pace could have had an effect on the differences in posttest scores between the control and experimental groups.

Fourth, the assessment in which students were asked to identify compound verbs, auxiliary verbs, and past participles, was given only to the experimental group. However, administering this assessment to both the experimental and the control groups would provide insight into whether participants in the control group were able to deduce the meanings of the terms *compound verb*, *auxiliary verb*, and *past participle* through the lesson on how to form the French *passé composé* and *imparfait*. Additionally, comparing the performance of the experimental and

control groups on the assessment would provide evidence for the effect of the lesson on metalinguistic terminology that the experimental group received. If both groups do not receive the same assessment, the researcher is unable to fully measure the effect of instruction of metalinguistic terminology on student comprehension of L2 grammar.

Fifth, the posttest which both the experimental and control groups took assessed participants on how to form the *passé composé* and *imparfait* of only one type of verb: –er verbs. Of these verbs, only one took *être* as its auxiliary verb in the *passé composé*. Furthermore, participants were not evaluated on their ability to form the *passé composé* and *imparfait* of pronominal verbs. The choice to exclude certain types of verbs, such as -ir, -re, irregular and pronominal verbs, was made intentionally in order to help control for the effect that memory might have on students' ability to perform on such a task. However, it has been noted that if participants were expecting to see a wide variety of verbs on the posttest, the fact that some of the verbs were not included in the assessment may have affected student performance.

Despite these limitations, this study can serve as a pilot study. As such, the study has suggested several areas for future research. More research is needed to correct the limitations of this study. Additionally, longitudinal studies could be conducted in the future in order to examine longer term effects of instruction of metalinguistic terminology on student comprehension of L2 grammar.

APPENDIX A SURVEY

Part 1

Name: (Please PRINT) _____

E-mail address: _____

Local phone: (_____) _____

Are you – 1 ____ Male 2 ____ Female

What is your date of birth? Month _____ Day _____ Year 19_____

What is your native language? _____

Have you already studied a foreign language? _____

If yes, which one(s)? _____

How long? _____

Part 2

Please circle the indicated elements.

SENTENCE 1: *We often write to them about our classes.*

Circle the **subject pronoun** in Sentence 1.

SENTENCE 2: *Did the teacher give you a homework assignment?*

Circle the **definite article** in Sentence 2.

SENTENCE 3: *He does well in math, doesn't he?*

Circle the **preposition** in Sentence 3.

SENTENCE 4: *The new printer works best.*

Circle the **adjective** in Sentence 4.

SENTENCE 5: *Has he already written his paper?*

Circle the **auxiliary verb** in Sentence 5.

SENTENCE 6: *She likes to do her homework while watching TV.*

Circle the **conjugated verb** in Sentence 6.

SENTENCE 7: *They haven't met their new neighbors yet.*

Circle the **past participle** in Sentence 7.

SENTENCE 8: *I disagree with that statement.*

Circle the **prefix** in Sentence 8.

SENTENCE 9: *The new teacher is very approachable.*

Circle the **suffix** in Sentence 9.

SENTENCE 10: *I enjoy acting.*

Circle the **root word** in Sentence 10.

SENTENCE 11: *The cafeteria always serves delicious meals.*

Circle the **adverb** in Sentence 11.

SENTENCE 12: *Give this to your roommate.*

Circle the **direct object** in Sentence 12.

SENTENCE 13: *Did you tell her the assignment?*

Circle the **indirect object** in Sentence 13.

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT FORMS

Informed Consent

Protocol Title: The effects of metalinguistic knowledge on student performance

Investigator: Alison Clifton

University of Florida

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Hélène Blondeau

Please read this consent agreement carefully before agreeing to participate in this study.

Purpose of the study:

This study involves research to examine students' ability to identify certain grammatical elements within a sentence.

What you will do in this study:

You will be asked to complete a survey consisting of thirteen questions. Afterwards, you may be contacted to participate in a follow-up study.

Time required:

The survey will take approximately twenty minutes to complete.

Risks:

There are no anticipated risks associated with participating in this study.

Benefits:

There are no immediate expected benefits from participating in this study. You will not be awarded any compensation for participating in the study.

Confidentiality:

Data collected will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. Your participation in this study will remain confidential. Your responses will be assigned a code number, and the list connecting your name with this number will be kept in a locked room. The list will be destroyed once all the data have been collected and analyzed.

Participation and withdrawal:

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You do not have to answer any question that you do not wish to answer. You may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty by informing the investigator that you no longer wish to participate (no questions will be asked).

Contact:

If you have questions about this study, please contact Alison Clifton, Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, University of Florida, 170 Dauer Hall, P.O. Box 117405, Gainesville, FL 32611-7405. E-mail: aclifton@ufl.edu. You may also contact the faculty supervisor, Dr. Hélène Blondeau, blondeau@rll.ufl.edu.

Whom to contact about your rights in this study:

UFIRB Office, P.O. Box 112250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-2250; ph (352) 392-0433

Agreement:

I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure, and I have received a copy of this description.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name (print): _____

Principal Investigator: _____ Date: _____

Informed Consent

Protocol Title: The effects of metalinguistic knowledge on student performance

Investigator: Alison Clifton

University of Florida

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Hélène Blondeau

Please read this consent agreement carefully before agreeing to participate in this study.

Purpose of the study:

This study involves research to examine the effects of metalinguistic training on students' ability to produce the passé composé and the imparfait past tenses in French.

What you will do in this study:

Following a session of instruction on how to form both the passé composé and the imparfait past tenses, you will be asked to complete a grammar exercise consisting of fourteen questions.

Time required:

The entire session will take approximately one hour.

Risks:

There are no anticipated risks associated with participating in this study.

Benefits:

There are no immediate expected benefits from participating in this study. However, you will be awarded compensation for participating in the study. You will receive ten points out of ten points extra credit in the form of a quiz grade in your FRE 1130 class.

Confidentiality:

Data collected will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. Your participation in this study will remain confidential. Your responses will be assigned a code number, and the list connecting your name with this number will be kept in a locked room. The list will be destroyed once all the data have been collected and analyzed.

Participation and withdrawal:

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You do not have to answer any question that you do not wish to answer. You may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty by informing the investigator that you no longer wish to participate (no questions will be asked).

Contact:

If you have questions about this study, please contact Alison Clifton, Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, University of Florida, 170 Dauer Hall, P.O. Box 117405, Gainesville, FL 32611-7405. E-mail: aclifton@ufl.edu. You may also contact the faculty supervisor, Dr. Hélène Blondeau, blondeau@rll.ufl.edu.

Whom to contact about your rights in this study:

UFIRB Office, P.O. Box 112250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-2250; ph (352) 392-0433

Agreement:

I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure, and I have received a copy of this description.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name (print): _____

Principal Investigator: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX C

SCRIPTS AND POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS

Research Script for Experimental Group

Metalinguistic Terminology

Note to the Instructor: In order to control for the different variables in this study, please do not deviate from this prepared script.

“This study involves research to examine the effects of metalinguistic training on students’ ability to produce the passé composé and the imparfait forms in French. I’ll begin by distributing the Informed Consent form which describes the study. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You do not have to answer any question that you do not wish to answer. You may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty by informing the investigator that you no longer wish to participate (no questions will be asked). Participation involves reading and signing the Consent Form, and then listening to two lectures. The first lecture explains certain grammar terms, while the second lecture provides instruction on how to form both the passé composé and the imparfait past tenses. After the first lecture, you will be asked to complete a grammar exercise consisting of fifteen questions. Once both lectures are completed, you will be asked to complete a second grammar exercise consisting of fourteen questions.”

“You may not ask any questions during the lecture. However, you may take notes. Let’s begin.”

Note to the Instructor: You should now read the prepared explanations from the provided Power Point presentation, allowing students approximately 30 seconds to view each slide. You should not deviate from the explanation provided in the presentation. Please do not add any additional commentary or point to any specific explanations or examples during the lecture. Simply allow the students to listen and process the new material.

After completing each PowerPoint presentation: “I will now distribute a short exercise that will ask you to demonstrate how well you understood the material that was presented to you in the previous lesson. You do not have to answer any question that you do not wish to answer. Please read the directions carefully. You may hand in the exercise to me when you have finished.”

Research Script for Control and Experimental Groups

Formation of the Passé composé and Imparfait

Note to the Instructor: In order to control for the different variables in this study, please do not deviate from this prepared script.

“This study involves research to examine the effects of metalinguistic training on students’ ability to produce the passé composé and the imparfait forms in French. I’ll begin by distributing the Informed Consent form which describes the study. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You do not have to answer any question that you do not wish to answer. You may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty by informing the investigator that you no longer wish to participate (no questions will be asked). Participation involves reading and signing the Consent Form, and then listening to a lecture on how to form both the passé composé and the imparfait past tenses. Once the lecture is completed, you will be asked to complete a grammar exercise consisting of fourteen questions.”

“You may not ask any questions during the lecture. However, you may take notes. Let’s begin.”

Note to the Instructor: You should now read the prepared explanations from the provided PowerPoint presentation, allowing students approximately 30 seconds to view each slide. You should not deviate from the explanation provided in the presentation. Please do not add any additional commentary or point to any specific explanations or examples during the lecture. Simply allow the students to listen and process the new material.

After completing the PowerPoint presentation: “I will now distribute a short exercise that will ask you to demonstrate how well you understood the material that was presented to you in the previous lesson. Again, you do not have to answer any question that you do not wish to answer. Please read the directions carefully. You may hand in the exercise to me when you have finished.”

PowerPoint Presentation on Grammatical Terminology

Welcome! Bienvenue!

Thank you for participating in this study. Please do not ask questions. If you wish, you may take notes.

Let's begin!

What is a Compound Verb?

- A **compound verb** is a two-verb structure constructed from (1) a conjugated auxiliary verb and (2) another verb.
- **Compound verb** = conjugated auxiliary verb + main verb
 - We **are speaking**.
 - “are speaking” is a **compound verb**
 - I **will study**.
 - “will study” is a **compound verb**

More Examples

- We **are celebrating**.
- “are celebrating” is a **compound verb**
- He **does not work**.
- “does” “work” is a **compound verb**
- I **can swim**.
- “can swim” is a **compound verb**

Compound Verb Recap

- **Compound Verb** = (1) conjugated auxiliary verb + (2) main verb

Auxiliary Verbs and the Perfect Tense in English

- You may use a conjugated **auxiliary verb** with a past participle in order to create the perfect tense in English.
- Perfect Tense = conjugated auxiliary verb + past participle

- I **have bought** a house.
- “have bought” is a **compound verb** in the perfect tense
 - have = **auxiliary verb**
 - bought = past participle

What is the Perfect Tense?

- In English, the **perfect tense** is a compound verb that can express actions that happened in the **past**
- Perfect Tense = Conjugated auxiliary verb + past participle
 - I **have seen** that film.
 - “have seen” is a **compound verb**
 - have = auxiliary verb
 - seen = past participle

More Examples of Compound Verbs in the Perfect Tense

- In each of the following sentences, the compound verb appears highlighted:
- You **have found** my bag?
■ Vous **avez trouvé** mon sac?
- The compound verb in this sentence is made up of the auxiliary “have” (“avez”) and the **past participle** “found” (“trouvé”).

What is a Past Participle?

- The **past participle** is “the form of a verb, typically ending in –ed in English, which is used in forming perfect and passive tenses and sometimes as an adjective” (http://www.askoxford.com/concise_oed/pastparticiple)
 - You have already **looked** at the presents?
■ Vous avez déjà **regardé** les cadeaux?

More Examples of Past Participles

- I **have traveled** to Germany.
- “have traveled” is a **compound verb**
 - have = **auxiliary verb**
 - traveled = **past participle**
- She **has broken** her arm.

- “has broken” is a **compound verb**
 - has = **auxiliary verb**
 - broken = **past participle**

Thank you for your participation!

APPENDIX D ASSESSMENTS

Experimental Group Assessment

1. Please circle the compound verb, if any, in the following sentences.

SENTENCE 1: I did not study.

SENTENCE 2: You have already eaten?

SENTENCE 3: He drove to school.

SENTENCE 4: We will work it out.

SENTENCE 5: You ate cereal this morning?

2. Please circle the auxiliary verb, if any, in the following sentences.

SENTENCE 6: Did you lose your wallet?

SENTENCE 7: They have already told me that story.

SENTENCE 8: I could drive faster than that.

SENTENCE 9: The man who robbed the bank was tall.

SENTENCE 10: She should not trust him.

3. Please circle the past participle, if any, in the following sentences.

SENTENCE 11: I have shown all of the plans to my supervisor.

SENTENCE 12: We did not learn the material.

SENTENCE 13: They had already told him the story when I arrived.

SENTENCE 14: I didn't give it to you.

SENTENCE 15: It was done as it was said.

Assessment for Control and Experimental Groups

- **Put the following sentences into the passé composé.**

- 1) Je parle français.
- 2) Georges va en Grèce chaque année.
- 3) Maria écoute un disque.
- 4) Vous n'appelez pas les pompiers ?
- 5) Julie et Jean adorent cette maison.
- 6) Tu travailles en France.
- 7) Nous apportons les photos de notre famille.

- **Put the following sentences into the imparfait.**

- 8) Je parle français.
- 9) Georges va en Grèce chaque année.
- 10) Maria écoute un disque.
- 11) Vous n'appelez pas les pompiers ?
- 12) Julie et Jean adorent cette maison.
- 13) Tu travailles en France.
- 14) Nous apportons les photos de notre famille.

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Bragger, Jeannette D., and Donald B. Rice. *J'veux bien!* Boston: Heinle & Heinle, 1995.
- Chastain, Kenneth. "Examining the Role of Grammar Explanation, Drills, and Exercises in the Development of Communication Skills." *Hispania* 70 (1987): 160-166.
- Ellis, Rod. "Does form-focused instruction affect the acquisition of implicit knowledge? A review of the research." *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 24 (2002): 223-236.
- Fouletier-Smith, Nicole, and Pam Le Zotte. *Parallèles: Communication et culture*. 2nd ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2000.
- Haggstrom, Margaret, et al. *Portes ouvertes: An Interactive Multimedia Approach to First-Year French*. Austin: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1998.
- Krashen, Stephen D. *Second language acquisition and second language learning*. Oxford: Pergamon, 1981.
- Krashen, Stephen D. "The effect of grammar teaching: Still peripheral." *TESOL Quarterly* 27 (1993): 717-725.
- Long, Michael H. "Does second language instruction make a difference? A review of the research." *TESOL Quarterly* 17 (1983): 359-382.
- Mohammed, Abdelmoneim. "Informal Pedagogical Grammar." *IRAL* 34 (1996): 283-291.
- Norris, John M., and Lourdes Ortega. "Effectiveness of L2 instruction: A research synthesis and quantitative meta-analysis." *Language Learning* 50 (2000): 417-528.
- Omaggio, Alice. *Teaching Language in Context: Proficiency-oriented Instruction*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle, 1986.
- Shrum, Judith and Eileen Glisan. *Teacher's Handbook: Contextualized Language Instruction*. 3rd ed. Boston: Heinle & Heinle, 2005.
- Soanes, Catherine, and Sara Hawker, eds. "Past Participle." *The Compact Oxford English Dictionary of Current English*. 3rd ed. June 2005. 16 Feb 2007
http://www.askoxford.com/concise_oed/pastparticiple.
- Terrell, Tracy. "The Role of Grammar Instruction in a Communicative Approach." *Modern Language Journal* 75 (1991): 52-63.
- Valdman, Albert, Cathy Pons, and Mary Ellen Scullen. *Chez Nous: Branché sur le Monde Francophone*. 3rd ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2006.
- Vande Berg, Camille Kennedy. "Metalinguistic Competence of Beginning French Students." *The French Review* 72 (1999): 644-657.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Alison Marie Clifton graduated from the University of Florida in August of 2007 with a Master of Arts degree in French Linguistics. She was awarded MA student of the year in French Linguistics for the 2006-2007 academic year. In May of 2005, Alison received her Bachelor of Arts degree in French and International Studies, graduating magna cum laude from Stetson University in Deland, Florida. She was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa, the National German Honor Society, and was named Outstanding Senior in both French and International Studies. Alison has been accepted into the doctoral program in French at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and will begin her studies in August of 2007.